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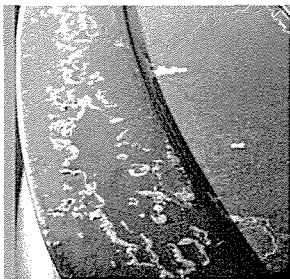
“Cars may last forever, but paint may only last five years [in Arizona-like weather],” says Kuehn, owner of Affordable Auto Painting in Tucson, Arizona.

Kuehn estimates that nine out of 10 people that walk into his shop for a paint job do so because of fading. Although fading isn’t as big of a problem in less extreme climates, there are several other reasons car owners might contemplate changing their vehicle’s color.

One reason may be because they’re selling the vehicle and investing in a paint job will yield top dollar. Another common reason is for aesthetic reasons, such as preventing rust or adding personal flair to the vehicle.

“Some are the results of an accident or an uh-oh moment,” says Mike Frost, owner of Maaco Collision Repair & Auto Painting in Laurel, Maryland. “Some are restoring older and classic automobiles and others just want a fresh coat of paint to turn the car they drive back into the car they love.”

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How to Prevent and Repair Car Paint Oxidation

The condition of a vehicle’s paint ranks among the top five items affecting the car’s value.

What is the cost to paint a car?

According to Cost Helper, the cost for a single-coat synthetic enamel paint job ranges from \$300 to \$900, with an average of \$566. A mid-level paint job with a higher-quality paint and additional prep work like removing rust and dents can range from \$1,000 to \$3,500 with an average of \$1,316. For a high-quality paint job drivers reported spending between \$2,400 and \$7,500, with an average price of about \$5,000.

Kuehn says the average price he charges to completely paint a car is between \$600 and \$1,000, which he says is below the national average. He says most full paint jobs cost around \$2,000. Kuehn says car painting is cheaper at his shop, in part, because it's a competitive business in southern Arizona, where the sun damages car paint quicker. Kuehn says prices vary depending on the paint color and the vehicle's size. The price of the complete paint job also depends on the color used. For example, a gallon of white paint may cost \$100, while red may cost \$250, Kuehn says.

For smaller jobs, such a bumper-to-bumper racing stripe, Kuehn says he charges between \$150 and \$200.

Frost says his company offers four types of paint jobs. Prices vary greatly, depending on the one you choose.

- A basic paint job includes a single-stage enamel paint used to refresh the vehicle's appearance. It comes with a one-year warranty and gives the vehicle a nice gloss with an accurate color match, Frost says.
- A preferred paint job is a single-stage application using urethane paint. It's more resistant than enamel finishes and comes with a three-year warranty, Frost says.
- A premium paint job is a two-stage application that includes a glossy finish, color match and urethane sealer. It comes with a five-year warranty.
- A platinum paint job includes light chip and scratch repair, priming and block sanding all areas, and a urethane sealer. It also comes with a five-year warranty.



Frost says his prices start at \$299 for a basic job, and up to \$3,000 for a premium show-car-quality finish, which includes a full wet sand and buff. He adds the base coat clearcoat offerings, which are part of the premium and platinum packages the company offers, start at about \$1,200.

"Prices are affected by location, body work needed, if base coats and clear coats are selected and more," Frost says. "All Maaco paint jobs are equal in quality, but there are two things that vary between the various types of paint jobs we offer: longevity of paint and appearance of paint and whether it's gloss, color match or metallic."

"We've [had] small spot paint requests on cars, ranging from small scratches and dents to bumpers, hoods and side view mirrors," Frost says. "We can't give an average price for these spot jobs because the prices vary so much based on the specific needs of the repair."



CostHelper estimates the price of painting a car at \$300 to \$600. (Photo by ©iStockphoto)

Things to consider before having your car painted

Ron Meister, owner of Shaker Quality Auto Body in Cleveland, says consumers should educate themselves before having their car painted. Meister's company offers paint repair but not whole-car painting.

Meister says paint repair prices vary drastically depending on several factors, such as whether the repair is to a fender, door and paint.

“People have unrealistic expectations of what the final product will be,” Meister says. “New paint makes trim flaws stand out even more. Paint alone will not correct flaws in the body. In fact, a shiny new coat of paint makes them stand out even more.”

Meister recommends getting in writing what a paint shop will do for surface preparation. He adds that it’s important to ask if there’s a warranty, whether the company paints doorjambs, fender edges and under the hood, as well as apply a protective clearcoat finish.

“Last, but not least, does it make economic sense to paint the car versus trading in the car?” he says.

Kuehn, meanwhile, recommends asking for references and looking at cars shops have painted.

“I see many cars that were at other shops for months or years with [the drivers’] deposits spent,” Kuehn says. “And the cars are in pieces, and the shop has closed or changed owners.”

Full vinyl car wraps have grown in popularity in recent years as an alternative to painting. Wraps can cost \$1,500 or more.

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How to Touch-up Car Paint

Is it worth the cost to get your car paint touched up?



July 25, 2016

By Tom Moor

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Tom Moor wrote for Angie's List Magazine and the Solution Center. The Indiana University graduate also penned a weekly automotive column.

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